

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's comments in the Advisory Action dated August 28, 2006 and request reconsideration in view of the clear illustrations provided herein with the associated discussion.

It is believed that the previous amendments were entered in the record (as is required for Examiner consideration) and hence the above amendments are made relative to Applicants earlier amendments.

A marked-up sheet 2 of 2 in the Siebert reference (US Pat. No. 5,169,244) [hereafter '244] is enclosed for review and further explanation by the Examiner of the present position. Attention is drawn thereto.

At present Applicant is confused by the Examiner's position in view of the clear differences in the '244 reference and our earlier agreement relating to these features and requests a direct interview to review the same. A request is also made for a specific citing of both the structural requirements in the present independent claims (as earlier amended) and a corresponding teaching within the '244 reference to enable the Examiners position to be understood in the record for future review.

The independent claims 1, 5, 8, 10, 17, and 19 require specific structural limitations that are not appreciated with the Examiner's analysis and are not found within the references, particularly the '244 reference. These differences are again outlined below. No comment from the Examiner is made regarding the allowability of claims 2-4, 6-7, 8-9, 11-16, 17-18, or 20 and notice of the claims status is respectfully requested. It is believed that an interview with the Examiner will readily place this application in condition for allowance.

In general it is noted that the claim language specifically functions to require the central opening to define front and rear faces to be both spaced apart/separate from each other and perpendicular to the axis of the opening (see drawing). This is in contrast to the Examiner's analysis of '244.

The claims also require that there be a single elastomeric member having a continuous hinge

means that surrounds and defines the central opening (not two separable parts joined by a narrow hinge tab such that each '244 face is split in half).

The claims require that two separate flange members (not one member 8 on each top and bottom hemisphere in '244) exist and that each of the members is spaced separate from each other and close ("proximate) to the so-defined front and rear faces – meaning extending generally perpendicularly to the central axis and not in the middle of the elastomeric member as in '244 distal from the faces.

The claims require that the two flange members extend from "outer edge portions" of the faces (in contrast to Sieber's element 8 which is in the middle of the field distant from the so-defined front and rear faces which also prevents the generation of a saddle region). This is fully discussed in the specification.

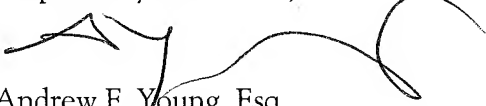
In sum it is respectfully proposed that the claims also require specific structural limitations that are not found in '244 absent abuse of the disclosure itself. It is respectfully proposed that the earlier agreement with the Examiner to clearly add the earlier dependent limitation to each respective independent claim is sufficient on it's face to avoid the '244 reference.

Independent claims 5 and 8 each require outer seal member elements not found in '244 that are separate from first and second flange members.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any additional fees associated with this communication, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 10-0100.

No new matter has been added. Reconsideration is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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